In other publications (2) we have brought up the question of

> 2. On dual organization in South America, América Indígena, Mexico, 1944. On certain structural similarities of the Chibcha and Nambikwara languages. Congrès International des Américanistes, Paris, 1947.

knowing if the type of life of the Nambikwara, apparently very primitive, does or does not constitute the authentic vestige of ancient conditions. Considered in the present, their level of culture is certainly very low. They live naked, especially the women, who only wear a thin string of buriti beads around the waist, some earrings, necklaces worn around the neck or looped over the shoulder, [14] bracelets made from the tail of the large armadillo, and, sometimes, some narrow bands of cotton woven by their husbands, or some buriti straw, tightly bound around the biceps, and wooden pins. Besides the same ornaments, the men sometimes put on a sort of straw pompom, fastened to the waist above the sex organs, and smaller ones, attached to cotton bracelets; on the other hand, they do not wear shell bracelets. The complete ignorance of the hammock and the Nambikwara custom of sleeping on the ground (or, more rarely, on long strips of the bark of the palm tree paxiuba) has intrigued ethnologists for a long time. This sentiment is shared by neighboring tribes, and the Parecí, mentioning this peculiarity, call the Nambikwara Halikoluré, "those who sleep on the ground."

The Nambikwara year must be divided into two distinct periods. During the rainy season (from October to March), each group settles on some small elevation rising above the course of some stream. The Indians then construct crude huts with curious variations in form and materials. They burn clearings in the approaches to the forests which occupy the humid valley floor, and there they plant and cultivate gardens principally with the starch-yielding plants of the manihot genus (sweet and bitter) and tobacco, sometimes some peas, cotton, peanuts, and calabash (Lagenaria sp.). They grate the yucca (manioc) on planks covered with the sharp bark of the palm tree, they press it with the aid of a piece of twisted bark. The garden produce furnishes food resources sufficient for part of the sedentary period, and even of use later: the Nambikwara preserve the yucca by burying the residue of the "grated" pulp in the ground.

At the arrival of the dry season, they abandon the village, or rather the site of temporary residence, and each group "breaks up," if one can say that, into several nomadic bands. For about seven

1: Lévi-Strauss--18 E-6 (1938-1939) 1948 SP 17 Nambikwara SP17

For about seven
223 months these bands go wandering across the prairie in search of small
[128] game, small animals such as caterpillars, spiders, grasshoppers,
rodents, snakes, lizards, and so forth, and fruits, grains, roots or
wild honey--in short, all that might keep them from dying of hunger.
Their camps, set up for one or several days, sometimes for several
weeks, consist of as many temporary shelters as families, made of
palms or branches stuck in a semi-circle in the sand and connected
at the top. This is the period when the quest for food absorbs all
activities. The women equip themselves with digging sticks and
221 the men hunt with the bow and arrow, of which several types must be
411 distinguished. The eastern groups have a bow with a flat section
184 which evolves toward a convex-plane section or a concave-convex
section when one moves westward. As for the arrows, those made
for hunting birds have a blunted tip. Arrows for fish have three to
five points, each one formed like a minute harpoon, and the stem
is without barb. The poisoned arrows (1), whose tip is protected [15]

1. See below, p. 98.

by a sheath of bamboo, are reserved for hunting monkeys and small
game. Those for large game have a long lanceolate point. The barb
is attached or sewed on. Besides the bow and arrow, the men use a club
[169] which often takes the form of a javelin, and its use is reserved for
magic and war operations (1).

1. Cf. below, p. 99.

224 The primary materials of the indigenous industry consist of varied
225 woods, wax from wild bees, resin, fibers of the buriti palm trees
(Mauritia vinifera) and tucum (Astrocaryum tucuma) bone of the
monkey, teeth and claws of mammals, fur (only to make ornaments),
feathers, quills of porcupines, vegetable shells and river shells, stones,
412 cotton and grains. As implements they have knives made from a sharp
piece of bamboo, from stones crudely fashioned, or from fragments
of iron or steel obtained through exchange, and fixed with the aid of
wax and cord between two pieces of wood forming the handle. Drills
are made of a borer of stone or iron mounted at the end of a stick
[17] which they turn between their palms. The Rondon Commission ex-
panded the use of axes and metal hammers, and the old stone axes
serve now only as small anvil blocks for fashioning shell or bone.
[415] The use of stone polishers must also be mentioned and, among the
objects of current usage, the spindles, combs, baskets and gourds to
carry water.

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While they speak of the latter with the excitement, and the almost exalted tone, of discovery. Let us listen to an informant (81) describe the double cycle of the year:

First the sedentary life:

87. sedeṽãtage kasaadeŋ hĩjodige sedeṽãtkero, yatiĩ'kero 22/0
Tomorrow go hunting come back again 539
yatiĩ'nikero dãkero undãkero 157
cook again go to bed again sleep again 182
naiŋg'kero ajwekikero ajẽ̃nkero
day again go to the field again cultivate the field again
ajẽ̃gnkero ãnkẽ̃ro nondkero ẽninãnkero
cultivate again leave again eat again
nang'kero danunkero tadtige tã̃ tã̃ tã̃
another day cut wood cut cut cut
tatunkero [tatãndige] nhãti nhãti nhãti
finish again wait wait wait
yatinkero ỹtnunãtage [ỹtnukero] ĩ'tnutỹt
burn again the cold comes [still the cold] plants
ãnunkero yatãa'tanunkero yaanunkero
to go again looking for some return again
ĩnãkero kakẽ̃dnatge [nakẽ̃nde] hĩ'ãtage kikero
plant much dig again
ĩkãranukitige ĩ'tnuãnkero
in order to plant dig plants cut again
tatãnãnkero dẽ̃ntertnapẽnkero aynãkero
finish again live a long time again pull up the roots
etnã'r etnã'l etnã'r hãnkero
grate grate grate finish again
nlakãrahinkero nkuãylakãrahĩ'nkero ãlakero hĩ'nkero
guãtay hikãninuni (81)
a new field again plant again

And now the great adventure of the nomadic period:

68. inkẽnãhaige mĩ'ãere ĩ'tige
We leave at dawn; [the basket] is made it waits.

[128] ããtage natãtige tya tyikini'nkero ĩ'kero
one packs; one fills the basket in the woods one travels one travels
nahoreda ãkero nlajdi'nkero ntorai'nkero ãnkero
one comes to the water one crosses the water one crosses on the way
ãnkero alorekidi'rekero aloraiĩ'kero
on the way! one takes the prairie one crosses the prairie

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AAA
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ãgagnãtãkɔ (ta) ãtãkɔ kamãkãtãkɔ ãgãkɔ
in the forest one travels again the hill one goes down travel
ãgãkɔ ãgãkɔ ãgãgnãnãtãkɔ nãgãkãtãkɔ
travel travel the hill one goes up the hill one crosses
kãkãkãtãkɔ ãtãnãtãkɔ ãgãkɔ
at the crest one travels one goes down another hill, more walking
ãkãgãnãnãgã hãgãkãkɔ hãnãkãkãkɔ
in the wet sand travel in the wet sand travel
hãgãkãkɔ hãkãnãtãkɔ nãgãtãkɔ
one passes the hut of other people traveling meets others
gãkãnãnãdã ãnãtãkɔ (51)
one is united with others here are the huts.

As is seen, the two forms of existence not are only very strikingly opposed from the economic and sociological point of view. They constitute two poles around which accumulate complex ensembles of emotions, sentiments and memories. With the same tenderness with which they caress their wives, the men evoke the type of life defined by the temporary shelter and the eternal basket, where the most incongruous means of subsistence are sparingly scraped, gathered together, caught each day, where one lives cruelly exposed to wind, cold and rain, and which leaves no more lasting trace than the souls of the women, dispersed by the wind and storms, on whose activity it essentially reposes. And almost like the reign of need is opposed to that of liberty, they conceive in a completely different aspect the sedentary life (whose specific and ancient character is still borne witness to the original species which they cultivate), but upon which the unchangeable chain of agricultural operations confers the same character of perpetuity as the reincarnated masculine souls, the durable house of winter time, and the cultivable land which will begin to live and to produce "when the death of its preceding cultivator shall be forgotten." (1) We do not think it possible to draw conclusions, from a work

1. Cf. quotation, p. 112.

having to do exclusively with several sociological and psychological aspects of the life of the Nambikwara, relative to the place one should assign them in the ensemble of South-American cultures. However, the preceding information suffices to show under what form the problem is posed. We are in [129] the presence of a culture which shows linguistic affinities with the Ŝiuŋa, and which approaches the Tupi from the double point of view of family organization and religious beliefs, at the same time recalling

2: Lévi-Strauss E-5 (1938-1939)1948
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Nambicuara (Roquette-Pinto's Uaintaya, which includes his *Kabishi*, *Tagaiteua*, *Tawaiti*, *Tarwaiti*, and *Tauhaiti*) between the Gaupore River Basin in the south and the Tenente Marques, Iki and Roosevelt Rivers in the north and northwest; *Western Nambicuara* (new), closely related to the central and southern groups and living on the headwaters and in the upper basin of the Roosevelt River; and *Northern Nambicuara* (new), speaking its own language and living north of the central group.

The Indians mention other tribes north of the *Nambicuara*; one called *Salumã*, *Sarumã*, or *Salamãi* is almost certainly the *Mondurucú*; another may be the *Tapuyuna*.

In 1907, Rondón estimated the total *Nambicuara* population to be 20,000. In 1912 Roquette-Pinto met 1,000 to 1,500. It is doubtful whether the total population, which has been decimated by several recent epidemics, now greatly exceeds 1,500.

The *Nambicuara* language was previously thought to be isolated, but its distinctive trait—the use of classificatory suffixes dividing the universe into about ten categories—is strongly reminiscent of *Chibcha*.

Nambicuara culture, although less primitive than that of the *Siriono* to the southwest, is strikingly simple in comparison with that of the neighboring *Parecis* to the southeast and of the *Tupi-Cawahib* to the northwest. Their lack of the hammock, their custom of sleeping on the ground, their crude ceramics (the *Eastern Nambicuara* entirely lack pottery), the nakedness of both sexes, their nomadism, their use of temporary shelters during most of the year, the general poverty of their material culture, and the simplicity of their social organization distinguish them from the higher cultures of the Gaupore River area, to which they nevertheless probably belong.

CULTURE

SUBSISTENCE

The *Nambicuara* habitat is a savannalike plateau about 500 to 1,500 feet (150 to 500 m.) above sea level with an arenaceous soil which comes from disintegrated sandstone bedrock. Except for narrow gallery forests along river banks, the region is infertile, having only shrubs and small trees with thorns or thick bark.

In this unproductive environment the *Nambicuara* have a dual subsistence pattern. They are both seminomadic bush dwellers and incipient farmers. During the dry season, women, accompanied by their children, forage with digging sticks for wild fruits, seeds, and roots, and catch grubs, rats, bats, spiders, snakes, lizards, and other small creatures, while men hunt what large game they can find with bows and arrows and collect wild honey.

2: Lévi-Strauss E-5 (1938-1939)1948
SP17 Nambicuara SP17

When rains come, the *Nambikwara* settle in temporary villages, and the men open circular gardens in the gallery forest by burning and felling the trees with stone (now steel) axes. They till the soil with pointed sticks and raise both bitter and sweet manioc, several kinds of maize which are different from those of their more civilized neighbors (Roquette-Pinto, 1938, p. 207 n.), beans, gourds, cotton, urucú and a variety of small tobacco with tiny leaves. Despite the difficulty of fishing in the deep, clear tributaries of the Juruena River, they have moderate success using fish arrows, basket traps, and a drug made of a vine.

Food preparation.—Game is usually only half cooked in hot ashes, but it is sometimes smoked on rectangular or pyramidal hairworks. Manioc is grated on thorns of the animal palm (*Iriartea* sp.) imbedded in palm wood planks. To remove the poisonous juice of bitter manioc, the pulp is either squeezed in a strip of bark twisted spirally or buried for several days to allow the juice to drain off. Balls of the pulp are then sun-dried and packed in leaves in baskets or buried at cached places. In times of scarcity, perhaps months later, the half-rotten balls are made into flat cakes, hastily cooked in hot ashes, and eaten.

The *Nambikwara* cannot bear to eat salt, which they do not know how to prepare, or pepper, which they do not cultivate. Even hot food is cooled with water before it is eaten. Wild honey, too, is diluted with water. The only condiment is a variety of cumaré bean which has a strong, bitter almond taste. It is boiled in pots; afterward the liquid is drunk and the beans are mixed with food, especially with grasshoppers crushed in mortars. Armadillo meat is often ground with maize flour.

Domestic animals and pets.—The *Nambikwara* have many pets, especially monkeys, coatis, parrots, and birds. Domesticated animals were unknown until the Rondón Commission introduced chickens and dogs. Although at first extremely afraid of dogs, the Indians quickly adopted them and treated them with the same deep affection they show all their tame animals. Even now they are terrified by cows seen at telegraph stations, and call them by the name given to the deadly spirits of the water and the bush. They do, however, hunt and eat horses and mules as if they were wild game.

HOUSES

The surprising variety of house types suggests recent borrowing from neighboring tribes. The *Nambikwara*, like the *Siwiond*, may formerly have lacked houses entirely. During most of the year, even at the present time, they build only scanty temporary shelters for a single night. These consist of branches of palms stuck into holes dug in the sand to form a half or quarter circle on the side from which the sun, the wind, or rain are expected (pl. 37, *center, left*). Each individual family builds its own

226 headwater streams. The deep clear streams make fishing with timbó difficult. Game in the forests and on the plain is scarce. Yet by exploiting all the resources of the area the Nambicuara are able to survive. In contrast to the other tribes reported in this monograph the Nambicuara have the broadest resource base, as the list of their resources in Appendix I indicates.

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132 The Eastern Nambicuara occupy the high plateau between Utiarity and Vilhena. At Utiarity the altitude is 443 meters and at Vilhena 665 meters. The dry season extends from May to September. Except for occasional south winds, which bring a cold drizzling rain for a day or two, the season is clear, cool, and dry, the daily temperatures ranging from 68° to 85° F. During this

[131 148] period the grass withers, the livestock of the white men having to subsist on shrubs and what fodder the owners can provide. Horses and mules, particularly, suffer during these months. In August

132 221 [228] the Indians burn the dry grass so that with the first showers new grass can grow out and attract the deer, which the Indians can then hunt.

[305] The dry season, which the Nambicuara call *kwaldeiu*, is the most difficult. By the end of June they have consumed the manioc, maize, beans, and other crops which they have planted. During July and August they subsist on palm nuts, sumbaré beans, fruta de lobo, snakes, insects, fish, and whatever animals they can kill on the plateau or in the forest. The rainy season

305 (*wakisu*) is divided into periods depending upon

221 the fruits as they come into season. September is known as *yaldéwsu*, for during this period the people depend upon the jaboticaba fruit. October and November are called *pa'ensaljêsu*, for during these months the bacaba palm nut ripens. December and January are termed *ikwa*, or piqui time. February and March are known as *enaiwa*, which appears to cover a variety of berries and small fruits. April and May are termed *dzuqueljêsu*, as many fruits and nuts come into season, particularly, the cashew nut. During these months the garden crops also come in, giving the Nambicuara a short period of abundance.

SETTLEMENTS AND SHELTERS

361 Each of the four Eastern Nambicuara bands

621 has a defined area within which it hunts, fishes, collects, and grows its crops. These territories in-

½ [1:9:A fish poison - A.] [p. 87 (2)] ½ [See cat. 116, pp. 124-126. - Analyst]

252 placed on a platform under which a fire is lighted. In this manner large quantities of farinha can be prepared in one day.

When a woman gets ready to bake a manioc cake she pushes the hot coals and burning wood to one side and puts down the hot bed of the fire with a flat piece of wood. She then breaks off pieces from a dried manioc loaf and crumbles them over the bed of the fire by rubbing them in her hands. When she has crumbled up enough dry manioc, she pats down the flour to form a round, flat cake about 10 inches in diameter and from 1 to 2 inches in thickness. She covers the cake first with hot ashes and then hot coals. After one-half hour she uncovers her oven to find a brown cake covered with ashes and cinders. This sour, dirty, gritty product in no way compares with the fine-textured, sweet manpé of the Camayurá, the meal for which is prepared by crushing the dry loaf in a mortar, then sifted to remove the rough fibers, after which the flour is dampened and baked on a pottery baking plate. Sometimes the whole manioc loaf is placed in the fire, and as it burns the Nambicuara begin to break off pieces from the outside. For commercial purposes they bake cakes about 2 feet in diameter.

291 Toward the end of the rains in April and May the Nambicuara return to their fields to enjoy the fresh garden products. The harvest is inaugurated with a harvest ceremony (kalokaal-khatu). Fresh maize, peanuts, and sweetpotatoes are roasted, manioc cakes are prepared, and, if possible, manioc juice is boiled to make chicha. These garden products, along with meat, supply the food for the feast, which lasts for several days. [262] [252] [534] The sacred flutes (waiwiku) are played in the flute hut, the spirits of the ancestors are present, and food and drink are offered to them.

221 The subsistence activities of the Nambicuara are, thus, closely associated with the annual cycle of growth in which agriculture forms but a part. The dependence of the Nambicuara upon the wild products of the forest and plateau are much more complex than has been indicated. They supplied long lists of names of plants, insects, and animals for which no Portuguese names could be found. A full understanding of their economic dependence upon the environment would come only by someone following a band of Nambicuara throughout the year to observe the complete annual cycle of

4 Oberg E-3 (1949)1953
SP17 Nambicuara SP17

221 subsistence activities. For instance, they say that they eat the blossoms of certain plants and a great number of grubs, larvae, and insects. A favorite dish is to crush in a mortar manioc cakes with boiled beans, broiled meat, nuts, palm nuts, monkey and bird bones.

[262 252] As an example of the variety of uses to which the Nambicuara can put a plant we can take the buriti palm: (1) They eat the pulp surrounding the scaly covered nut. (2) They use the fibers from the new growth to make twine. (3) They use the tough, flexible center of the frond stalk for making baskets. (4) They fell the buriti so that a certain variety of grub can collect and multiply in the starchy pith in the heart of the tree. The grubs or larvae they then eat uncooked. (5) The dried frond stalks are tied into bundles and used as floats for crossing rivers. In addition, the buriti palm has male associations, for only men can prepare its products. When a male child dies a piece of buriti fiber is left over his grave.

372 The Nambicuara make fire by the drill method. They cut two round pieces of dry stick about 10 inches in length and three-quarters of an inch in diameter from some bush that has a soft pithy center. The lower stick is split and into the flat side shallow notches are cut to hold the drill in place. The drilling stick is then inserted into the notch while the lower stick is held in place by the toes of the man as he squats over it. He then begins to twirl the stick between his palms, pressing downward. As his hands reach the bottom, he quickly brings them to the top and continues drilling until the pith in the lower stick bounces into small smouldering balls. These he places into a handful of dry buriti fiber and begins to blow on them until the fiber ignites. About 2 minutes is all that is required to make a fire by this method.

MANUFACTURING

412 The material equipment of the Eastern Nambicuara is extremely simple. Many items, such
415 as the conical trap for catching fish, the floats for crossing rivers, the loom for weaving arm bands, and the mortar and pestle for crushing food products are made for the occasion and are discarded when the task is completed or when the people move. The small grater and the few gourd vessels, small baskets, and twine, the woman carries

[p. 92(B)]

?; Roquette-Pinto--17 E-4,8 (no date) 1938 SP17 Nambicuara SP1"
(ca. 1912)

[6] The geographical range of the name "Nambicuara" is very significant; the term designates these Indians both in Mato Grosso and in Pará. This means that the inhabitants of the Serra do Norte are known by the same name to the north and to the south.

This might lead us to believe that the name is unusually distinctive. However, it is unknown to its bearers and altogether alien to the dialect of any of the groups. It is fitting nevertheless to retain it in order to avoid confusion.

[7] The southern boundary of the Nambicuara region is the Papagaio
[8] River.

In the north their territory apparently extends to the Gi-Paraná; in the east, to the Tapajoz; in the west, to the Guaporé.

The people who live near the banks of the Juruena and Juina, between the Papagaio and Camararé riven, [216] and whom I shall name the "southeastern group," are called "Cô[illegible]" or "Cô[illegible]."

Those who live along the lower reaches of the Dose de Outubro River are called "Anunsê"; I shall refer to them as the "northeastern group." They probably extend as far as the confluence of the Arinos Juruena rivers, where a few members of the first group are also likely to be found.

[illegible] Those who live to the southwest of the wintering place [invernada] at Campos Novos extend down to the Guaporé River; they are called "Uainrazê" and constitute the "southwestern group."

The great "northwestern group" lives near the Madeira River, on the banks of tributaries of the Gi-Paraná. It seems to consist of various secondary groups related in ways which have not yet been clearly defined. The Indians I encountered at the wintering place of Três Buritis, at the Campos de Quatorze de Abril, at José Bonifacio and at Campos de Maria de Molina all belong to this division. Their principal group lives between the Dose de Outubro and Roosevelt (Rio da Dúvida) rivers.

Of the northern division I found only the Tagnani, Tawite, Saluma, Tarute and Tashwite [Taschuitê]; and I only succeeded in gathering data on the first two.